

Message Text

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12

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 SAM-01 /083 W

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P 310700Z DEC 74

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3052

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USCINCEUR

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINS, PINT, ET

SUBJECT: ASMARA MEETINGS ON ERITREAN PROBLEM

1. SUMMARY: DELEGATION FROM PMG BEGAN MEETINGS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS ON 28 DEC TO DISCUSS SOLUTION TO ERITREAN PROBLEM. PMG DELEGATES BLAMED FORMER ADMINISTRATION FOR THE PRESENT PROBLEM AND CALLED FOR A SOLUTION WITHIN CONTEXT OF ETHIOPIA FIRST. THE LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES POINTED OUT THAT A MEANINGFUL SOLUTION REQUIRED THE PARTICIPATION OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE ELF/PLF. END SUMMARY.

2. IL QUOTIDIANO ERITREO OF 29 DEC GAVE DETAILED REPORT OF MEETING ON 28 DEC. A DELEGATION HEADED BY MININF MICHAEL IMRU, AND CONSISTING OF AMANUEL AMDEMICAEL, ERITREAN CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR, MOHAMMED ABDULRAHMAN, MINCOMIND TOURISM; MAJ. BERHANU BAYU, DIRG MEMBER; ATO MENGHISTU, FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIAL; AND DR. FITIGU

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TEDESSE MET FROM 1000 TO 1430 HRS WITH LOCAL LEADERS.

3. ATO AMANUEL AMDEMICAEL OPENED MEETING WITH REMARKS CALLING FOR A SOLUTION TO A SERIOUS PROBLEM UNDER THE PHILOSOPHY OF ETHIOPIA FIRST, WHICH SOUGHT EQUALITY, JUSTICE AND LIBERTY FOR ALL ETHIOPIANS WITHOUT REGARD TO RELIGION OR REGION. HE BLAMED THE ERITREAN PROBLEM ON THE OLD REGIME AND SAID THAT THE PMG WAS SEEKING A SOLUTION BASED ON ETHIOPIAN SOCIALISM. MICHAEL IMRU SPOKE ALONG SIMILAR VEIN AND ADDED THAT PMG WAS OFFERING ADMINISTRATIVE AUTONOMY TO ALL PROVINCES, SO THAT THE PEOPLE COULD SOLVE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS. MAJ. BERHANU BAYU, WHOSE WIFE IS ERITREAN, SPOKE OF THE CULTURAL AND HISTORIC TIES BETWEEN ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA, AND SAID THERE WAS NO REASON FOR THE TWO TO SEPARATE. ATO MOHAMED ABDULRUHMAN CALLED FOR ALL ETHIOPIAN TO WORK TOGETHER TO CONSTRUCT A NEW ETHIOPIA UNDER THE MOTTO OF ETHIOPIA FIRST.

4. THE RESPONSE OF LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES WAS NOTABLE FOR THE TONE OF DEFIANCE. FIT. IBRAHIM MUSA RECOGNIZED THE NEED FOR UNION BUT POINTED OUT THAT MANY ERITREANS ARE WITH THE ELF FIGHTING AGAINST OPPRESSION. BASCIAI IDRIS HASSEN NAIB TOLD THE DELEGATION THAT IT HAD TO CONTACT DIRECTLY THE ELF/PLF BECAUSE THE POPULATION COULD DO NOTHING BY ITSELF. DEG. BHEBREKIDANE TESEMMA PROPOSED THE FORMATION OF COMMITTEES ELECTED FROM EACH DISTRICT. AMANUEL AMDEMICAEL

REPLIED THAT THE PRESENT GROUP REPRESENTED ALL DISTRICTS. ABU ALAMA CALLED ON THE DELEGATION TO MEET WITH THE ELF/PLF. KEGN. OMAR KADI RECALLED THAT THE ERITREAN PROBLEM BEGAN WITH THE ABOLITION OF THE FEDERATION ESTABLISHED BY THE U.N. TO MAINTAIN AN EQUILIBRIUM IN THE PROVINCE. FATHER AGOSTINO DA HEBO TOLD THE DELEGATION TO MEET WITH THE ELF/PLF, AND THAT IT WAS NOT ENOUGH TO ASK THEM TO RETURN. COL. GHEBREMEDIN ASIHIL (RETIRED POLICE), CONDEMNED THE OLD REGIME AND TOLD THE DELEGATES TO MEET WITH THE PEOPLE AND THE ELF/PLF. HE THEN ADDED THAT THE SECURITY OF THE CITY WAS IN THE HANDS OF THE POLICE AND THAT THE ARMY SHOULD NOT INTERVENE WITHOUT AN OFFICIAL REQUEST.

COMMENT: I USED THE TERM ELF/PLF WHERE THE NEWSPAPER USED EX-PATRIATES.
PERRY

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